

## **Congressman Also Calls for Passage of a Balanced Budget Amendment**

Washington, D.C.—U.S. Congressman Mike Pence gave the following speech on the House floor this morning urging colleagues to "keep an open mind on the Boehner plan" that would raise the nation's debt ceiling while also reducing spending. Pence also called for passage of a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

"Mr. Speaker, this is a difficult time in the life of the people of this country. Families are hurting. Our economy is struggling. The economic policies of this administration have failed to turn around this great recession as it has come to be known.

"And I believe that runaway federal spending, deficits, and debt are a barrier to our economic recovery. A barrier to putting Americans back to work.

"We have to change the fiscal direction of this government for this generation, for jobs for Americans today, and for future generations who are facing a mountain range of debt: \$14 trillion national debt, \$1.65 trillion deficit this year alone.

"As most of my colleagues know, I fought against runaway spending on a bipartisan basis. I opposed big government plans when they were offered by Republican presidents and in Republican Congresses. I fought with equal vigor against the borrowing, the spending, the bailouts, and the takeovers of the recent Democratic Congress and this administration.

"But now we come to another debt ceiling vote. And as the late Russell Kirk wrote, 'Politics is the art of the possible.'

"The American people are looking in and they know if you owe debts you pay debts. We have to find a way to pay the nation's bill.

"But the American people also know we have to find a way to set our nation on a course of living within our means once again.

"Now, I am still studying Speaker Boehner's proposal. But there is much that recommends it.

"I have long said there should be no increase in the debt ceiling without real and meaningful spending cuts and reforms in the short term and in the long term. And in many respects the deal negotiated with Senate leaders by Speaker Boehner meets that standard. There are no tax increases in the bill. After adjustments to the bill today there will for certain, according to CBO, be dollar-for-dollar cuts for any increase in the debt ceiling. Also there are spending caps, a commission, and the possibility of long-term entitlement reform. All of this commends the Boehner plan as an important first step toward fiscal discipline and reform.

"There is also a call at some point to vote for a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution. It's my belief in the importance of that last element that brings me to the floor today.

"I rise to urge all of my colleagues to keep an open mind on the Boehner plan. But also to keep an open mind about bringing a Balanced Budget Amendment to the floor that could enjoy broad

bipartisan support.

"Look, Washington, D.C., is not only broke, it's broken.

"The American people have seen both political parties run up deficits and debt. Both political parties live outside the means of the American people and they know in their heart of hearts that something is missing. I believe that's a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

"Now, I've authored the Spending Limit Amendment to the Constitution. I support the stout version of a Balanced Budget Amendment that Republicans marked up and referenced in the Cut, Cap and Balance bill, a spending limit cap, a supermajority on tax increases. But I don't think it takes any great insight to know that that bill will likely not get the 290 votes that we need to send it to the Senate and send it to the states.

"So in addition to voting on that bill with spending constraints and others, I believe the time has come to bring the historic Balanced Budget Amendment back to the floor of the Congress.

"I believe there should be no increase in the debt ceiling unless this Congress does everything in its power to send a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Senate and to the states for ratification. And I believe we have that moment.

"I've talked to some of the most prominent members of the Democrat minority in this Congress today, and they've expressed support for this amendment.

"The American people overwhelmingly support a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution.

"And so I urge my colleagues to keep an open mind. Keep an open mind to the Boehner Plan. I'm continuing to study it, and seeing if we can embrace it as an important first step on fiscal

discipline and reform, finding a way to pay the nation's bills but change our fiscal direction.

"But I also encourage my colleagues to consider at some point in the near future, let us bring to this floor a Balanced Budget Amendment that could enjoy broad bipartisan support.

"To know that we can not only make progress toward fiscal discipline and reform, but we can make history by restoring to the national charter – or placing in the national charter – those restraints on spending that this nation's Capitol, under both parties, so desperately needs."